

June's safety month

Safety—it's an attitude

by Carol Carpenter

No matter who you are, where you are or what you're doing, being safe is as much—or even more—an attitude than it is luck or fate.



Whether you're at work, home, play or some place in between, that attitude can mean the difference between suffering an injury (or worse) and doing what it takes to be safe, said **Terry Dembrowski**, Western's Safety manager.

"Safety is definitely an attitude," he said. "If you're not thinking safety at home, you probably won't do so at work. You must think safety all the time for it to be effective."

Too many employees think once they leave work, where safety is regularly made an issue, they can just "let down their

hair" and mostly forget about it. Even at work, some employees think an accident will happen only to "someone else"—most likely a lineman or electrician out in the field.

"Office people tend to think only crews need to think of safety issues, but office people can experience costly incidents, too," Dembrowski said. "They probably won't be injured pulling a file out of a drawer, but they could slip or fall down a step and have serious consequences as a result."

Another point to consider is that if something happens to you while you are away from work, you may not be available to do your job, Dembrowski noted.

To develop a good attitude about safety, employees must be constantly aware they are vulnerable to life's potential hazards, at work, at home and during the drive in between, Dembrowski cautioned.

If employees develop this awareness, they will take the necessary steps to be on

the lookout for problems. Not that people need to feel afraid every minute to be safe, Dembrowski added, pointing out that it's best to be as cautious as possible without becoming overly concerned or paranoid.

"For the best measure of success, people should think how they can control their own fate," he said.

Among the many actions one can take are these: installing smoke alarms at home, wearing seat belts while driving and resolving to attend safety meetings at work. All are simple, practically effortless things everyone can do to increase their chances of remaining safe.

It's important when you develop your "new attitude" that you don't allow yourself to fall back into your old ways of behaving, which is easy to do, Dembrowski warned.

But the most important thing to remember is to change the way you think about safety, he said. Develop a new awareness of potential hazards in all circumstances and change your attitude from "It can't happen to me" to "It can happen to me" and "I'm going to do everything possible to make sure it doesn't!"

(Note: Carpenter is a public affairs specialist in Golden.)

